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ABSTRACT

The community mental health center was the research setting for the development of an organizational climate questionnaire. Initially, a Q-Sort technique was applied to a large pool of items derived from existing climate questionnaire statements and interviews with mental health professionals. The item pool was administered to 440 mental health professionals employed in 24 community mental health facilities. Results of the factor analyses revealed an interpretable three-factor questionnaire for measurement of the mental-health clinic climate according to the following dimensions: administrative recognition, staff congruence, and facility conditions. (A sample questionnaire is included.) (HAI)

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THE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

by

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The "organizational climate" construct has emerged from a consideration of the internal environmental variables affecting organizations. The construct offers the perspective for a molar analysis of the organization through the perceptions of its members. As Smith (1973) has noted, the "reality picture" shared by organizational members represents one approach to analyzing communicational and organizational effectiveness (p. 3). The potential value of the organizational climate concept has been succinctly summarized by Redding (1972)

> The "climate" of the organization is more crucial than are communication skills or techniques (taken by themselves) in creating an effective organization (p. 111).

Similarly, the organizational climate construct has gained considerable notice as a global concept capable of revealing a wide spectrum of organizational information. Scales for the measurement of organizational climate in educational and business organizations have been developed (Halpin and Croft, 1963; Stern, 1967; Borrevik, 1972; and Payne and Pheysey, 1971). Organizational climate is defined as a "set of attributes which can be perceived about a particular organization and/or its subsystems and that may be induced from the way that the organization deals with their members and environment" (Hellriegel, 1974, p. 256).

Organizational behavior researchers have called for further climate research in an effort to determine the nature of the factor structures in different organizational settings, and to establish an administrative theory built on an organization taxonomy (Campbell, 1970; and Hall, 1972). Through the development of an organization climate questionnaire, Hunter, (1976) sought to delineate the factor structures of an organizational climate in a relatively unresearched organizational setting: the community mental health center.

The community mental health center stands as the dominant symbol of present mental health ideology and service provision. A multi-faceted approach to servicing subpopulations, it has emerged as a viable alternative to the inadequacies of the state hospital system (Golann, 1972, p. 15). The impetus for the community mental health movement originated from recommendations initiated by a joint commission authorized by the Mental Health Study Act of 1955 (Public Law 182, 84th Congress, 1955). Wherein the commission called for (1) the establishment of full-time mental health clinics for purposes of treating the acute mentally ill, (2) continuing care of discharged patients, and (3) providing a central base for mental health consultants (Golann, 1972, p. 12). For nearly two decades, mental health resources have been gradually shifting from the state hospital to this community-based facility.

The pervasive impact of the current mental health philosophy was summarized by Schwartz (1972):

> If not a true revolution, community mental health is at least the beginning of a viable evolution in attitudes and action programs concerned with the psychological well being of man and his potential for effective and gradifying existance in his world (p. 33).

Thus, the community mental health center is foremost an organization whose vital and dynamically integrated set of functions and relationships are designed to meet community and personal mental health needs.

The Mental Health Center Climate Questionnaire (MHCCQ) resulted from employing initially a Q-Sort technique on a large pool of items derived from existing climate questionnaire statements and interviews with mental health professionals. The item pool was subsequently administered to four-hundred and forty mental health professionals employed in twenty-four community mental health facilities. Subject responses were submitted to a series of factor

analytic procedures yielding a seventeen item three-factor questionnaire. An analysis of the resulting data revealed that the revised Mental Health Center Questionnaire met acceptable validity and reliability standards and provides a measure of the construct as perceived by mental health clinic staff personnel. The MHCCQ demonstrated high construct validity (82 per cent of the common variance), unanimous consensus in its content validity, but exhibited low concurrent validity when correlated with the Margulies OCDQ instrument. Total test reliability was .90.

The combined organizational climate questionnaire subdimension scores were not found to be significantly related to the selected clinic process and output variables of job satisfaction, monthly admission rate, and service percentage rate. A canonical correlation analysis revealed three canonical variates based on the combined clinic factor scores and the process and output measures. The three canonical variates identified three correlation coefficients which failed to achieve statistical significance. When considered separately, the MHCCQ factor relating to Administration Recognition produced a statistically significant relationship with the clinic process variable of job satisfaction.

Results of the factor analyses revealed a relatively clean and interpretable three-factor questionnaire unlike factor structures in previous climate research. Two significant divergences from past research efforts seem to prevail. First, the factor analytic procedures clustered items primarily by organizational level rather than by specific behavioral concept. The MHCCQ clustered items by behaviors related to the administration or to staff in two or the three dimensions. Climate instruments designed for other organizational

settings factored into behaviors described as interpersonal support, reward incentives, organizational structure and job autonomy. Within two of the three MHCCQ dimensions interpersonal support, reward incentive, and conflict/ cooperation statements dominated. Secondly, the items retained based on the factor analysis were predominantly affective in nature, focusing on the interpersonal skills of organizational personnel. Only a two-item third factor relating to "facility conditions" were dissimilar from the heavily "human-oriented" statements. The revised questionnaire demonstrates an item composition more narrowly defined than climate instruments for other organizational settings. The MHCCQ suggests that mental health employees perceive their organizational climate from a more "human relationships" perspective than employees of other organizational settings. These results are not surprising when it is remembered that mental health personnel work continually with the emotional needs of clients and therefore perhaps maintain a greater perceptual awareness of such needs for their own lives. Community mental health employees seem to perceive their organizational climate more in terms of affective dimensions than do personnel in education or industry. The dimensions delineated in this study for the measurement of the mental health clinic climate are: (1) Administrative Recognition, (2) Staff Congruence, and (3) Facility Conditions.

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MENTAL HEALTH CENTER CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Richard E. Hunter, Ph.D.

The Mental Health Center Climate Questionnaire (MCCQ) represents a diagnostic and research tool for the assessment of the organizational climate in community mental health centers. The instrument provides the capability of isolating organizational climate strengths and weaknesses on the basis of administrative initiators, staff level initiators, and the adequacy of facility conditions through the perceptions of its organizational members.

MHCCQ Dimension Descriptions:

1. Administrative Recognition
   The extent to which community mental health administrators initiates interpersonal support with staff members through personal feedback or through incorporating organizational mechanisms of recognition.

2. Staff Congruence
   The extent to which community mental health staff members initiate interpersonal support and demonstrate or withhold cooperation among themselves.

3. Facility Conditions
   The extent to which facility equipment and/or decor assists or inhibits the performance of organizational members.

MHCCQ Reliability

The internal consistency of the MHCCQ was determined through the statistical formula coefficient alpha yielding a total-test reliability of .91. Reliability estimates of each of the questionnaire's three subtests are: Administrative Recognition (.91). Staff Congruence (.89), and Facility Conditions (.73). (N=255)

MHCCQ Validity

Factor analysis was the statistical procedure used for determining the instrument's construct validity. A varimax rotational solution resulted in a seventeen-item, three factor matrix which accounted for 82.8 percent of the common variance. Administrative Recognition represented 40.6, Staff Congruence generated 29.7, and Facility Conditions accounted for 12.4 percent of the common variance. (N=440)

MHCCQ Availability

The Mental Health Center Climate Questionnaire and its scoring procedures are presently available from the author upon request.

MENTAL HEALTH CENTER CLIMATE QUESTIONNIARE

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information on the organizational climate that exists in your center. Please provide frank and honest responses. The questionnaire is not a test. Therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. Be sure to answer each question as best you can. Do not place your name on this form and feel assured that no attempt will be made to identify you. Circle the number that most appropriately relates to your response to each statement.

EXAMPLE:

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Group decisions are hard to come by in this center.	5	(4)	3	2	1

(SA) Strongly Agree
(A) Agree
(U) Undecided
(D) Disagree
(SD) Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. The administration recognizes good work and communicates their satisfaction to staff members.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Administrators here have provided adequate equipment for center staff members to complete their tasks.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The administrators willingly listen to the personal concerns of staff members.	5	4	3	2	1
4. There's not much trust among staff members here.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Staff members appear to be particularly considerate of their fellow employees.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The administrators have overlooked the necessity for adequate equipment and facilities for their staff.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Hard work is appropriately rewarded in this center.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The work atmosphere here allows for the participation of nearly all personnel in the establishment of center policies and procedures.	5	4	3	2	1
9. The administrators encourage staff members to enhance their skills through contact with fellow employees.	5	4	3	2	1
10. The rewards and encouragements given in this center are numerous and professionally stimulating.	5	4	3	2	1
11. It is evident that the feelings of center personnel are important concerns of the administration here.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Center personnel help each other in whatever way they can.	5	4	3	2	1
13. A staff member is not likely to receive credit for his accomplishments in this center.	5	4	3	2	1

14. Staff members make every effort to get along with each other in this center.	5	4	3	2	1
15. The administration is friendly and receptive to staff members.	5	4	3	2	1
16. The conflict among staff members is intense and disturbing.	5	4	3	2	1
17. A friendly and accepting atmosphere exists among the staff members in this center.	5	4	3	2	1

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